



# SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

As shown in Seaport Table 1, the Seaport's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 4.5 percent in February, from January's rate of 4.4 percent. In February 2000, the rate was 4.1 percent. Total employment decreased by 90 from January to February. Some of the decrease will be temporary and employment, such as outside work, will increase in March. Compared to February 2000, however, total employment decreased by 3.4 percent (1,130).

In February, the Seaport's *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 330 jobs from January 2001, but decreased 380 jobs from February 2000. In analyzing jobs by industry, slight increases occurred in almost every industry except for *Other Manufacturing* and *Wholesale Trade*. Decreases were expected in *Other Manufacturing* as metal fabricators temporarily laid off workers due to decreased orders. All of these workers are expected to return to work in March or April. *Wholesale Trade* decreased because of layoffs after the holiday season. Employment increased the most in *Construction*, *Service* and *Education*. Compared to last year, however, only *Government Administration*, and *Transportation* increased in employment. *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* for January and February 2001 has averaged 320 jobs below the average for January and February of 2000.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: POPULATION

As shown in FYI Table 5 on page 26, population in North Central Idaho (NCI) between 1990 and 2000 increased 11.5 percent, according to recently released data by the U.S. Bureau of Census. In spite of the increase, all five counties in NCI (Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis and Nez Perce), lost ground when compared to population growth in the other 39 counties of Idaho. The region's economic engine, Nez Perce County, generated an increase of only 10.8 percent in population over the ten-year period—barely holding its 8th population rank in the state. Latah County, the fastest growing NCI County at 14.1 percent, fell in rank from 9th in 1990 to 10th in 2000. High unemployment, sawmill closures, and U.S Forest Service cutbacks produced weak population growth in Clearwater, Lewis, and Idaho counties. By far, Region 2 (NCI) as a whole has not

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

	Feb 2001*	Jan 2001	Feb 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	33,860	33,900	34,750	-0.1	-2.6
Unemployment	1,530	1,480	1,290	3.4	18.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.5%	4.4%	3.7%	0.1%	-0.8%
Total Employment	32,330	32,420	33,460	-0.3	-3.4
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	34,840	34,730	35,110	0.3	-0.8
Unemployment	2,040	1,960	1,720	4.1	18.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.9%	5.6%	4.9%	0.3%	-1.0%
Total Employment	32,800	32,770	33,390	0.1	-1.8
<b>JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>	25,240	24,910	25,620	1.3	-1.5
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	5,010	4,960	5,280	1.0	-5.1
Mining & Construction	1,130	1,070	1,150	5.6	-1.7
Manufacturing	3,880	3,890	4,130	-0.3	-6.1
Food Processing	70	60	130	16.7	-46.2
Lumber & Wood Products	720	710	800	1.4	-10.0
Paper Products	1,760	1,750	1,830	0.6	-3.8
All Other Manufacturing	1,330	1,370	1,370	-2.9	-2.9
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	20,230	19,950	20,340	1.4	-0.5
Transportation	1,340	1,340	1,320	0.0	1.5
Communications & Utilities	280	270	290	3.7	-3.4
Wholesale Trade	980	1,010	960	-3.0	2.1
Retail Trade	5,100	5,050	5,170	1.0	-1.4
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,400	1,390	1,430	0.7	-2.1
Services	6,800	6,750	6,910	0.7	-1.6
Government Administration	1,860	1,870	1,760	-0.5	5.7
Government Education	2,470	2,270	2,500	8.8	-1.2
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

participated in the strong population growth experienced by other regions in the state. A more detailed analysis by county is provided below.

**Clearwater County:** A slight increase of people moving into Clearwater County prevented a population decrease. Those that did move into the county chose to because of its scenic and rural nature. Between 1990 and 2000, population increased only 5 percent, dropping Clearwater County's population ranking, compared to Idaho's other 43 counties, from 26th in 1990 to 29th in 2000. City population increased in Elk River and Orofino but decreased in Pierce and Weippe. Severe economic conditions—caused by cutbacks at the U.S. Forest Service, closures of a sawmill, and temporary layoffs at other sawmills—have given Clearwater County the highest unemployment rate in the state.

**Idaho County:** As in Clearwater County, in-migration played the dominant role in population growth since 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, population increased 12.7 percent, holding Idaho County's state population ranking at 19th. City population increased in Cottonwood, Ferdinand, and Stites. However, population decreased in Kooskia, Riggins, and Whitebird. Grangeville and Kamiah reported virtually no change in the ten-year span. Severe eco-

conomic conditions in Idaho County have produced the fifth highest unemployment rate in the state. Cutbacks at the U. S. Forest Service and temporary layoffs at sawmills have contributed to the decreased population growth.

**Latah County:** The controlling factor in population growth for Latah County can be tied to growth at the University of Idaho. County population and the university's enrollment have grown, almost exactly, at the same percentage rate. Even though Latah County produced the highest population growth of the five counties in North Central Idaho, its state population ranking dropped from 9th to 10th. City population increased in all cities within the county. Moscow, Genesee, and Juliaetta grew the most from 1990 to 2000.

**Lewis County:** Population in Lewis County grew 6.6 percent from 1990 to 2000. The small growth in ten years dropped the county's population ranking from 36th in 1990 to 40th in 2000. However, because of Lewis County's close proximity to the area's economic engine (Lewiston and Clarkston), and low county land costs, Lewis County may become a bedroom community, which will increase population. Population increased in all cities within the county. The cities of Reubens, Winchester, and Nezperce produced the most growth.

**Nez Perce County:** Despite being the economic engine of the region, population in Nez Perce County grew only 10.8 percent from 1990 to 2000. The anemic growth for this urban county just barely held Nez Perce County's state population ranking at 8th. Economic conditions, such as high unemployment in surrounding counties and layoffs in key employment industries within the county, have hurt population growth. Population did increase in all cities within the county. The city of Lewiston has 83 percent of the county's population living within its city limits.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Idaho & Lewis Counties

- A-1 Windshield Repair has opened a mobile business in Riggins. Making its service particularly convenient, the new business will repair windows, give free estimates, and complete direct billing to insurance companies, all at the customer's location.
- After more than eight years of trying to make a go of the business, Kamiah's Lumbermen's Building Center has called it quits. "There simply was not a consistent return for the investment that the stockholders were looking for," said Lumberman's vice president. The Kamiah lumber and hardware store employed six people. All were given the opportunity to transfer to another of the company's 52 stores in the Pacific Northwest.
- A Cottonwood resident has developed a universal ball hitch to fit varying sizes of trailers. By pulling a single pin, his patent-pending design takes only seconds to rotate to the desired ball size and/or to lower the hitch to the desired level. The new hitch is being sold through Hilltop Welding and Fabrication in Cottonwood.

### Latah County

- Construction has begun on the Moscow Ice Rink, which is being built by the Palouse Ice Rink Association. The structure will be a skeleton of steel supports with a fabric covering. Grand opening is expected in April or May 2001.
- Verizon, formerly GTE, will close its Phone Mart in Moscow by May. The Moscow office is among those on the chopping block that Verizon is closing in the Northwest. The decision to close Moscow was based on a combination of revenue, sales, and "long-term viability."

### Nez Perce County

- After evaluating several sites in Lewiston, Home Depot has chosen a site for their new store on the east side of Thain Grade, almost directly across from Staples Office supply store. The plans show a road cut into the high rock wall adjacent to the traffic light at Staples. According to City of Lewiston planners, the plans call for the largest earth-moving project in the history of Lewiston.
- Potlatch Corporation's Clearwater Lumber Mill in Lewiston reopened in March after being shut down for three weeks. Company officials said they made the decision to reopen to serve customer needs, even though market conditions and high energy and log costs have not improved. The temporary closure idled about 320 workers.
- Blount Incorporated of Lewiston announced a temporary layoff of 24 workers because of the lack of product orders. Blount expects to rehire when orders increase. Blount manufactures ammunition for the sporting industry, the military, and law enforcement agencies.
- Decorative accents for home, garden, and patio are the focus of Wildflower, a business that opened its doors in downtown Lewiston on March 1. The renovated store, at 618 Main Street, features a wide variety of merchandise—from floral arrangements to antiques and secondhand furniture.
- Thunderjet, a Lewiston-Clarkston Valley jet boat manufacturer, is considering an expansion that would add 15 jobs. Owners of Thunderjet Boats told Port of Clarkston Commissioners in March that they are investigating building a 30,000-square-foot building on two acres at Ninth Street and Port Way, near the Port of Clarkston. The company plans to combine 20,000 square feet of space it has in Lewiston and Asotin into a single location, and double its capacity to produce jet boats. Employment is expected to increase from 30 to 45 or 50 employees.

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